

# HEALTH ISSUES

## Nutrition

### NUTRITION AND FEEDING THE PRESCHOOL CHILD

Nutrition and feeding the preschool child can be fun and exciting if we know what to expect of preschool children, what foods they should have and how to bring children and foods together happily.

#### 1. What to expect of preschool children

##### a. No two children are exactly alike

1. Children differ in body build - this is genes, stuffing won't change him, lack of food can.
2. Children grow at different rates - inner clock
3. Muscle control develops at different rates.
4. Children react differently according to temperament. Some like variety, others have strong opinions and are not flexible.

##### b. Similar stages of development of children in relationship to food.

1. Great activity - need for practice in muscle development.
2. Contrariness - has learned the word "no" and wants to try it.
3. Imitation - copies you but sometimes too much praise of food makes the child wonder why?
4. Need for routine - secure in regularity, 3 year olds especially.
5. Dawdling - a way of life, food designs, he's got no where else to go, takes edge off appetite.
6. Food jags - Bread and Jam for Frances - Hoban
7. Security of few rules - no lectures.

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c. Preschool child needs to do for himself what he can do.

1. Allow him to feed himself.
2. Provide opportunities for him to be helpful - food preparation.
3. Encourage him to brush his own teeth after eating.

2. What food should preschool child have?

a. From the Four Basic Food Groups

1. Milk and dairy products
2. Eggs, meat, poultry, fish
3. Fruits and vegetables
4. Breads and cereals

3. Foods between meals - Most preschoolers need snacks, for their energy needs are great. Between meals is too long and snacks help get all the necessary nutrients for children as they have small stomachs. It is best to snack at the same time each day and not constantly. Protein stays with you longer. Consider that if they are asking for food all the time, is it boredom or attention getting?

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### Assignment: FOOD ATTITUDES

We are indeed much more than we eat,  
but what we eat can nevertheless  
help us to be much more than we are.

*Adele Davis*

Food attitudes are learned when we are young. it is often a powerful lesson filled with emotions (positive or negative) and actions that speak much louder than words.

1. When you were a child were meals a happy time?
2. How important are good manners?
3. Do you need to clean your plate?
4. Is dessert a reward?
5. What foods do you like?
6. What didn't your mom fix?
7. Do dads cook? When? Where?
8. Will you "try anything"?
9. When you go out do you try something you've never had?
10. Is food only for physical growth and energy?
11. How does your child respond when you say, "Oh! I hate \_\_\_\_\_ (lima beans, etc.)."?
12. Who gets served first? Last?
13. Did your family watch television while you ate?

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### GOOD FOOD HABITS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Pre-schoolers are this way about food:

1. Since they aren't growing as fast as they did during their first years of life, pre-schoolers will eat less in proportion to their size. When they have had enough foods, they will stop eating. Don't insist on a clean plate.
2. They like small servings. A plate piled high with foods, or a cup filled to the top may discourage them from finishing. Fill cups only half full, cut sandwiches into 4 parts, and fill plates only part full. Let pre-schoolers ask for more, if they want more.
3. They enjoy "finger foods." So serve them foods they can pick up such as: carrot and celery sticks, strips of green pepper, cauliflower pieces, wedges of lettuce or cabbage or tomato, turnip cubes, apples, etc.
4. Pre-schoolers are trying to be independent. Let them feed themselves when possible. Have straight-handled spoons and short-handled forks small enough for them to manage. Let them use a bowl-like dish to make it easier to pick up the food.
5. However, pre-schoolers get tired by the end of a meal. A certain amount of dawdling is not unusual. A little help with the last few spoonfuls will help him finish.
6. Pre-schoolers find some foods hard to chew. Remove bones and tough parts, and cut big pieces into bite-sized pieces. (they usually enjoy ground meats.)
7. They prefer variety in shapes . . . not all square-shaped, not all round ones.
8. They like color and respond well to different colors of food on their plates. See that all the foods on the plate are not the same color.
9. They enjoy the feel or texture of foods. Serve some crisp, chewy foods (like apples, celery, lettuce, etc.) and some soft foods (like potatoes, bread, soups, etc.) at each meal.

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### Pre-schoolers Are This Way About Food (Continued)

10. Pre-schoolers have sensitive taste buds. Strong or highly-flavored foods can actually taste too strong to them. As they grow older they'll enjoy the stronger flavors (like spinach, hot spices, etc.) Until then, serve mostly mild-flavored foods. (You can make the strong-flavored vegetables more mild by cooking them in an extra amount of water.)
11. They like moderately warm foods. So let milk warm up to room temperature after removing it from the refrigerator, and let hot foods cool a bit before children begin eating. Do not insist that pre-schoolers eat or drink food right out of the refrigerator or "hot from the stove."
12. Pre-schoolers are not eager to try new foods. Introduce new foods gradually, only one served at a time when you are serving a meal that contains old favorites. Don't insist that all the new food be eaten. If the child doesn't like it, respect his opinion and try serving the new food a different way another day.
13. Pre-schoolers prefer simple foods to elaborate mixtures. Rich sweet foods, heavy gravies, and strong flavors have little appeal to him. Serve simple foods.
14. Pre-schoolers love surprises. Occasionally serve a favorite food with a surprise in it. (for example, try putting a bit of fruit in the bottom of a custard.)
15. Even a good eater might need a between-meal snack. But see that snacks are not served too close to meal times. . . serve them at mid day. (fruit juice in mid-morning, and milk after nap time are recommended.)
16. The pre-school child's interest in food may vary from day to day and from week to week. He may eat like a lion one day and eat practically nothing the next day. Similarly, he may go on food jags (eating large amounts of only one food for several days a time.) These phases are only temporary. Let him enjoy them without criticism. They will soon disappear.
17. A pre-schooler will eat better with mealtime hours and a definite place for him to eat. Serve meals at predictable times, and if possible, provide him with a child-sized table and chair to eat on.

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### Pre-schoolers Are This Way About Food (Continued)

18. Pre-schoolers are likely to be messy at eating. Remember, they are still learning! Give them a good bib and protect the table and floor. At this age, the most important thing is that they learn to ENJOY EATING.
19. Children begin losing teeth around age 6. The front four are usually the first to come out. When their teeth or gums hurt it can be hard to chew.

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### Child-Size Servings of Common Foods

Meat Group: Two servings needed per day	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years
Meat, poultry, or fish Eggs Cheese Peanut Butter	1 1/2 ounces 1/2 1 ounce 1 tablespoon	2 to 3 ounces 1/2 to 1 2 ounces 2 to 3 tbs.
Mild Group Three servings needed per day		
Milk Cheese Ice Cream	1/2 cup 1 ounce 1/4 cup	3/4 cup 2 ounces 1/2 cup
Fruit and Vegetable Group Four servings needed per day		
Raw vegetable (carrot) Cooked vegetable or fruit Fruit juice Fresh fruit (Apple or Orange)	1/4 medium 3 Tablespoons 1/4 to 1/3 cup 1/4 medium	1/4 medium 1/4 to 1/3 cup 1/2 to 3/4 cup 1/2 medium
Bread and Cereal Group Four servings needed per day		
Bread Cereal	1/2 slice 1/4 cup	1/2 to 1 slice 1/3 to 1/2 cup

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### FOUR FOOD GROUPS

This sheet shows the amount of a nutritional serving for each of a variety of common foods. Each food is listed under the food group to which it belongs.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Food Item</u>	<u>Approx. Serving Size</u>
Milk	Milk (all types)	8-ounce glass
	Yogurt	8-ounce carton
	Pudding or custard	1 cup
	Cheese	1-1/3 ounces
	Cottage Cheese	1-1/2 cups*
	Ice cream	2 cups*
	Milkshake	8-ounce glass
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Meat	Cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish	2 ounces (edible food)
	Hot dogs	2 hot dogs
	Lunch meats	2 ounces (2 slices)
	Tuna fish	2 ounces (1/4 cup)
	Eggs	2 eggs
	Dried beans or peas	1 cup (cooked)
	Nuts	1/2 cup
	Peanut Butter	4 tablespoons
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### FOUR FOOD GROUPS

(Continued)

Group	Food Item	Approx.. Serving Size
Vegetable-Fruit	Most vegetables & fruits	1/2 cup
	Vegetables & fruit juices	1/2 cup
	Canned vegetables and fruits	1/2 cup
	Vegetable-base soups	1 cup
	Orange, apple, tomato banana, potato, etc.	1 medium
	Corn	1 medium
	Grapefruit	1/2 medium
	Cantaloupe	1/4 medium
	Lettuce of salad greens	1 cup
Bread - Cereals	Bread	1 slice
	Bun (hamburger or hot dog)	1/2 bun
	Biscuit	1 (2-inch)
	English muffin	1/2 muffin
	Dinner roll	1 roll
	Pancake	1 (4-inch)
	Tortilla	1 (7 - 8 inch)
	Rice, oatmeal, grits	1/2 cup cooked
	Macaroni, spaghetti, noodles	1/2 cup (cooked)
	Dry cereal	1 ounce (1 cup)
	Saltine crackers	5 crackers
	Graham crackers	4 crackers

\*Note that for cottage cheese and ice cream the amount of serving is much larger than a normal helping.

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FOODS INCLUDED IN A GOOD DAILY DIET: Average amounts for each age

Food	3-5 years	5-9 years	10-12 years	13-15 years
Milk	1 cup	2 or 3 cups	3 cups or more	3-4 cups or more
Eggs	1 whole egg	1 whole egg	1 whole egg	1 or more whole eggs
Meat, poultry, fish	2 oz. (1/4 cup) 1 small serving	2-3 oz. (1 small serving)	3-4 oz. (1 small serving)	4 oz. or more (1 small serving)
Dried beans, peas	3-4 tbsl.	4-5 tbsl.	5-6 tbsl.	1/2 cup or more
Potatoes (May o be replaced by equal amount of macaroni, or spaghetti, rice)	3-4 tbsl.	4-5 tbsl.	1/2 cup or more	3/4 cup or more
Other cooked vegetables (often a green leafy or deep yellow vegetable	3-4 tbsl. at one or more meals	4-5 tbsl. at one ore more meals	1/3 cup or more at one or more meals	1/2 cup or more at one or more meals
Raw vegetables (lettuce, carrots, celery, etc.)	2 or more small pieces	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	1/2 cup or more
Other Fruits	1/3-1/2 cup	1/2 cup or more at one or more meals	1/2 cup or more at one or more meals	2 servings
Vitamin C Food(Citrus, fruits, tomatoes, etc.)	1 med. size orange or equivalent	1 med. size orange or equivalent	1 med. size orange or equivalent	1 large size orange or equivalent
Other fruits	1/3-1/2 cup	1/2 cup or more at one or more meals	1/2 cup or more at one or more meals	2 servings
Cereal	1/3-1/2 cup	3/4 cup or more	1 cup or more	1 cup or more
Bread	1 slice	2 or more slices	2 or more slices	2 or more slices
Butter or fortified margarine	1 tbsl.	1 tbsl.	1 tbsl. or more	1 tbsl. or more
Sweets	1/3 cup simple dessert at 1 or 2 meals	1/2 cup simple dessert at 1 or 2 meals	1/2 cup simple dessert at 1 or 2 meals	1/2 cup simple dessert at 1 or 2 meals

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### Recommended Allowances

Preschool 3-5 years	1600 Calories, 40 grams protein
Early Elementary 5-9 years	2100 Calories, 52 grams protein
Later Elementary 10-12 years	Girls: 2200 Calories, 55 grams protein Boys: 2400 Calories, 60 grams protein
Early Teens 13-15 years	Girls: 2500 Calories, 62 grams protein Boys: 3000 Calories, 75 Grams protein

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### Handout: FINGER FOODS

Remember that finger foods promote the use of the thumb and index fingers together and this is an important skill for holding the pencil and scissors well in school

finger sandwiches  
hard boiled egg wedges  
cheese cubes  
small ham rolls  
peanuts  
almonds  
walnuts  
apple wedges - red, green  
pear wedges  
stuffed celery  
celery pieces  
carrot rounds  
orange wedges  
banana slices

pineapple chunks  
melon pieces  
crackers  
cookies  
space balls  
olives  
pickles - wedges, chips  
finger jello  
grapes  
cucumber slices  
mushrooms  
meat balls  
chicken wingettes  
chicken nuggets

### SPACE BALLS

1 cup peanut butter  
1 cup dry milk  
1 cup honey or fruit baby food  
1 cup rice crispies

Mix all together, form into balls and roll in extra rice crispies. Eat! Yummy snack.  
High in protein. May use all four food groups.